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## Robert Cameron's Quarter Century

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As Robert Cameron celebrates his silver anniversary at the Mary Pappert School of Music, he can look back over a career marked with numerous firsts for Duquesne, more than many could claim in 25 years.

Upon joining the Music School faculty, Cameron's artistic vision—continued musical growth by providing diverse learning experiences and exposing students to the highest levels of professional talent—led him to establish the Wind Symphony and lead the group on tours that earned national exposure.

# ROBERT CAMERON'S QUARTER-CENTURY

*Wind Symphony Director Celebrates Career Milestone*

## “...what Duquesne does is of national and international nature.”

“Touring is important to our students because they receive national exposure,” Cameron said. “They have been able to perform on the same stage with wind ensembles from numerous music schools, such as Eastman and Indiana, to see for themselves how comparatively well they play.”

Over the years Cameron and his student musicians have traveled across the country, performing for major regional and national music conventions. On several occasions, the Wind Symphony has been selected through audition to perform for the College Band Directors National Association and the Music Educator’s National Conference.

Cameron also helped gain visibility for the Music School by creating The Art of Wind Ensemble and Band Conducting symposium, a weeklong summer workshop that brought prominent conductors from national and international locations to campus. Students from the Music School volunteered as performers, adding to the mix of musicians, young and experienced, who came to campus to hone their talents.

Also among the highlights of his tenure at Duquesne, was the honor to lead the Wind Symphony at Carnegie Hall in New York City in 2004. He received the invitation after a composition by one of his students won a major competition, garnering attention from New York producers. “It was an incredible moment for the students and for myself,” Cameron commented.

Cameron selects the Wind Symphony and Symphony Band repertoire meticulously. “The pieces’



*Dr. Robert C. Cameron (center) flanked by (from the left) James Berry, Dr. James Spinazzola, Dr. Fernando Jimenez, Dr. Ryan T. Nelson, Dr. Donald McKinney, Dr. Jonathan Neiderhiser, Dr. David Jacobs, Dr. Brett Dietz and H. Carl Hess.*

educational value is of greatest importance,” Cameron said. “We pick something new, something old, and sometimes a premiere work. Overall, the performance has to be educationally challenging, interesting and exciting.”

Among colleagues he is well respected as a conductor and arranger. His setting of Franz Biebl’s *Ave Maria*, published by Boosey and Hawkes, was voted one of the best band publications of the 20th century by *Band World Magazine*. “I heard the beautiful piece sung by a choir once and immediately wanted our ensemble to perform it. After some research, I found out that it had not been transcribed for winds,” Cameron recalled. “So I did it.”

Having grown up in Thailand and fluent in the language, Cameron has returned to conduct, adjudicate and teach numerous times. His work there has included several nationally televised concerts with the Royal Thai Army Band and more recently a visit to guest conduct the Mahidol University Wind Symphony and to adjudicate the Thailand International Wind Ensemble Competition, for which the highly

coveted first prize of one million Baht (\$33,000) prize is awarded.

Cameron’s legacy and achievements were celebrated in November during a silver anniversary concert in Pittsburgh’s Carnegie Music Hall. The concert brought nine of Cameron’s former students—who now hold prominent conducting positions at major universities—to perform alongside their mentor.

“The talent level was extraordinary,” recalled Cameron. “I’m very proud that Duquesne has produced so many great conductors.”

As for the future, Cameron aims to continue expanding his artistic vision, nurturing growth through diverse experiences and strongly avoiding complacency.

“I try to bring Duquesne into the spotlight nationally by touring and inviting world-renowned conductors and guest performers to campus,” Cameron said.

“We are much more than a local school; what Duquesne does is of national and international nature.” ●